

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER ROBERT M. McDOWELL**

Re: Recommendations of the Independent Panel Reviewing the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on Communications Networks, EB Docket No. 06-119 and WC Docket No. 06-63.

I support our action today to move forward on a number of the recommendations made by the Independent Panel Reviewing the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on Communications Networks (Hurricane Katrina Panel). Our work is particularly timely, given that the Atlantic Hurricane season begins tomorrow, June 1, and scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center are projecting a 75 percent chance that hurricane activity will be above normal this year.

Moreover, it is particularly helpful that our efforts regarding emergency preparedness have broad applicability, given the need to plan for not only natural disasters such as hurricanes, but also for incidents like terrorist attacks, influenza pandemic outbreaks and industrial accidents. Any of these emergencies could result in sudden and significant shortages of personnel, a surge in communications traffic, possible disruptions to communications networks (due to increased telecommuting during an influenza pandemic, for example), and lack of manpower to immediately repair affected communications networks. I am pleased that we have built upon the lessons learned from the Hurricane Katrina disaster to promote more effective, efficient response and recovery efforts, as well as heightened readiness and preparedness. Thank you to all involved.